

## DOCTRINE OF THE SECURITY OF THE BELIEVER

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**Prayer:** Our Father, we thank You that You spoke and the worlds were created, You commanded and they stood fast. The sovereign God, Who in His will, together with His Son slain from the foundation of the world, planned our redemption. We're so grateful for it, even that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us, that whosoever may call upon the name of the Lord may be saved. We thank You for the joy of our salvation. We pray that our daily walk may be such that this joy will be continual, that we'll turn away from sin readily and embrace that which is righteous as we read it in the Word of the living God. Now, our Father, to this end enter into this period. May You be glorified through the Son and the Holy Spirit, in Jesus' precious name. Amen.

Our study today is on the security of the believer. There are several matters we will be dealing with regarding eternal life: the nature of this life, the gift of this life, the assurance of this life, the double assurance of this life, and then some objections to this particular doctrine of the security of the believer. Then we'll have some conclusions.

### The Nature of This Life

**John 10:27,28:** My sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow Me. And I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand. My Father who gave them to Me is greater than all, and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand. I and My Father are One." "I give unto them eternal life." Notice that the life you and I were given when we received Christ as our personal Saviour is **eternal**. "Aionia" or "aionias" is a Greek word which in some cases is limited in its intent. You determine that by the context in which the word is used. In most cases it refers to the way it is translated here, the word "eternal." It is used clearly in the sense of everlasting or eternal. For example, in Romans 16:26 the "everlasting God" is this word "eternal" -- God without end. Or in Revelation 20:10, they are "tormented day and night forever and ever." "Forever and ever" comes from the use of this particular word, and it is the word John uses here in quoting Christ, "I give unto them eternal life," I understand that to mean that the life He gives us will never end.

### The Gift of This Life

"I give unto them eternal life." This eternal life is a gift. If you think you have done anything to receive it, you are mistaken. It is a gift. In Luke 10 there is a lawyer who comes to Christ and asks Christ, "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" Christ questions him and summarizes the commandments of the Old Testament. Surprisingly enough, Christ says, "This do and thou shalt live." He seems to be saying to that lawyer, "If you keep the commandments of

the Old Testament you will have eternal life." I'd like to suggest to you my opinion with regard to that. I think that's correct. If you and I could live absolutely without one mistake in our entire lifetime in keeping the commandments of God, we would have eternal life. When God put Adam and Eve into the garden without sin, had they lived perfectly they would have earned, if I may use that word, eternal life. But somewhere along the way a piece of fruit (not an apple but probably a fig) tempted them and they fell.

From the Gospels we know our Lord Jesus Christ lived a sinless life -- "which of you convicteth Me of sin?" and no one could. Then just before the cross, our Lord is up north and the Scripture says, "And when it came time for Him to be received up, He steadfastly set His face toward Jerusalem." Again, this is my opinion, but you think about it. Christ had lived a sinless life as a human being, and at that point He might have been received back up into Glory. Instead, He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem. He was the sinless sacrifice in your place and in mine.

So, if you can live a perfect life, keeping the ten commandments always, you will have everlasting life. Hypothetically that's true, but actually it is not true. How often we have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. Therefore, God stepped in and gave us a gift of eternal life by what Christ did on our behalf.

In Acts 16, the story of the Philippian jailer, you remember that Paul and Silas were put into jail in the inner prison in the stocks and sang at midnight the praises of the Lord. I always admired them for doing that. Then all of a sudden the earthquake comes and all the bonds are broken. And the Philippian jailer, because he knew that if anyone escaped it would cost him his life, was about to kill himself. Paul, somehow knowing that's what he was about to do, said, "Do thyself no harm, for we are all here." And the Philippian jailer came in and fell down and said, "What must I do? What is it necessary for me to do?" He thought he had to do something to earn this eternal life these fellows were testifying about. Paul said, "No, there isn't anything you need to do. It has all been done. Just believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved." So, I repeat, if you think you need to do something to earn your salvation you're wrong. We don't do anything to earn it; therefore, we don't do anything, **do anything**, to keep it.

Listen to what Paul says in Galatians 3, verses 2 and 3: "Received ye the Spirit by the law or by the hearing of faith?" The answer, of course, is "by the hearing of faith." "Then are ye so foolish, having begun in the Spirit ye are made perfect by the flesh?" The answer is, "No." There is nothing you can do in the flesh to keep it or to perfect it, except to walk by faith. I ask myself two questions: "How many good works does it take to save me?" The answer, of course is, keeping that law perfectly, and that I cannot do, and you can't either. The second is, "How many sins, then, does it take for me to lose eternal life?" Well, if eating a piece of fruit does it, if being angry in the wrong way does it, if coveting does it, who in the world of us can keep that salvation if it depends on what we do? So we're saved by grace, we're kept by grace -- it is a gift of God which lasts forever.

Comment: In Mark's Gospel, Christ said, "You're not far from the kingdom," but He didn't say he was saved.

- A. Thank you. In the Luke account, He said, "This do and thou shalt live." Incidentally, there He was quoting from the Old Testament, the Pentateuch, where that same principle is set forth before Israel. If you keep this you will live.

### The Assurance of This Life

The third point -- in verse 28 it says, "they shall **never** perish." In the Greek it is very emphatic. It is remarkable that when Christ said this He did two things that are not evident in our English translation. For example, the word "never" is a double negative -- "oo may." If we were to translate literally, we would read that verse, "and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never, never perish" -- a double negative. A double negative means that "this shall never occur." Also, in the Greek New Testament there is something that practically no English translation has. The Greek Testament adds "eis ton aionion" after the word "perish," that is, "forever." So if you translate that verse literally, you have, "and I give unto them eternal life and they shall never, never perish forever." How strong can you get? There's the assurance of that eternal life, and I believe what God says with regard to it.

### The Double Assurance of This Life

The fourth point -- the double assurance of eternal life. Notice the last part of the verse, "Neither shall any man pluck them [or seize them] out of My hand." In Romans 8:38,39, Paul states, "For I am persuaded that neither death nor life nor angels nor principalities nor powers nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth nor any other creation [rather than creature] shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord." However different or difficult or unexpected, still comes this same Creator who says He's on our side and nothing shall pluck us out of His hand. Some say, "Yes, but I can take myself out of the Lord's hand." These verses of Scripture tell me that there is nothing, "any other creation," -- and I am a creation of God -- **nothing** is able to take us out of the hand of God.

We have eternal life -- it is a gift -- and an assurance, a double negative, a double assurance, that we shall never, never perish forever. That, I believe, underlies the security of the believer.

I will deal with one or two objections to the doctrine of the security of the believer. The first one is, "So, you're saved and it doesn't matter what you do because you're saved forever." "You are saved and it doesn't matter what you do." This is perhaps one of the more frequent objections to this doctrine. It does matter what we do. We are saved forever and it matters tremendously what we do. First of all, for the sake of Christ.

My dad was not a Christian until he was in his seventies. Our side porch faced within a short block and a half of a church. My dad would sit there on Sunday mornings in the rocking chair watching those people go into church and coming back out. On more than one occasion, though he did not fault-find continually, I would hear him say as he saw one particular person go into church and come out, "So that fellow's a Christian? He goes to church Sunday mornings but lives for the devil the rest of the week. Do you mean to tell me that fellow's a Christian?" I did not know the individual so I could not tell for sure, but, I'm saying to you and to myself that since I am saved, and I am saved eternally, I represent Christ and I had better do a good job of it so I do not bring shame on Him.

The second thing is, it does matter what I do for my own sake. Turn to Romans 14:10: "But why dost thou judge thy brother and why dost thou set at naught thy brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ" -- the bema of Christ. At the archaeological dig in Corinth you go down through the valley. To the right there are a number of building blocks about six or eight feet high, about ten or twelve feet long that form a "bema" -- a judgment seat. That's where the judge sat and people were brought before him to be judged for whatever cause they might have been there. Paul uses that word to remind us as Christians that one of these days you and I are going to stand before the judgment seat of Christ. In II Corinthians 5 he says, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ to give an account for the things done in the body, whether they be good [in quality] or bad." Look at I Corinthians 3:11: "For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid which is Jesus Christ. [That's our salvation.] Now if any man build upon this foundation, gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble, every man's work shall be made manifest, for the day shall declare it because it shall be revealed by fire. And the fire shall test every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built upon it he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned he shall suffer loss, but he himself shall be saved, yet as by fire."

Notice Paul is saying here that into your life and mine as we live we are putting in building blocks. They are gold, silver, precious stones; they are wood, hay and stubble. One of these days when the Lord catches us up to be with Him, the first order of business is to stand before that judgment seat of Christ. Revelation 22 says, "Behold, I come quickly [that means "swiftly"] and My reward is with Me." So you can expect, believer, that the moment we are caught up to be with the Lord in the air, and before we enter into Heaven that is spotless, you and I will stand before that judgment seat of Christ. Every deed in our lives will be examined, except those sins of course which we have confessed and gotten rid of, but the effects may be there, and the Lord will judge us, not to determine our destiny -- that's already settled by that gift of eternal life -- but to determine our rewards. Then we take those rewards and lay them at His feet, because we've received them only by grace. That is a serious thought. I have forgotten who the well-known author is, but he said, "One of the most serious thoughts that ever entered my mind was that I would stand before the judgment seat of Christ." And so,

we are saved eternally, but it matters a **great deal** what we do. We need to be sure we have something to lay at the Lord's feet.

I am thinking today of that beautiful land  
I shall reach when the sun goeth down.  
When through wonderful grace by my Saviour I stand,  
Will there be any stars in my crown?

or

Must I go and empty-handed,  
Thus my dear Redeemer meet?  
Not one day of service give Him,  
Lay no trophy at His feet.

I think that you and I, as believers in the Lord Jesus, will want to hear our Saviour say, "Well done, good and faithful servant." It does matter how we live for Him.

There's another aspect to this. Turn to I John 5:16: "If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask [or request] and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is sin [not a sin, but sin] unto death. I do not say that he shall pray concerning it." "There is sin unto death." A believer may sin, represent the Lord so poorly, that the Lord says, "That's enough. You come on home." Have you ever been in a church service where there was a cantankerous child who just would not behave? The mother tries to calm him down or hold him down and to shush him. Finally, she yanks him by the nape of the neck and takes him home to deal with him more properly. That's exactly what the Lord does to believers. You and I cannot tell when the Lord is going to do that, and we are not to judge, but the Scripture is clear that it does happen.

In I Corinthians 11, where the Apostle Paul is dealing with the communion service of the Corinthians, you will remember that he says, "Now, you're not acting like Christians in this place. You are gorging yourselves, you are not sharing, there's sin in your life, and for this cause [I Cor. 11:30] some of you are sickly and some sleep." Now, just because someone gets sick don't think it is because they have sinned -- you and I cannot judge. But God says through the Apostle Paul "and some of you are sick because of the way you are living as Christians, and **some sleep**" -- that means they have died because of the way they were acting at the communion service. John 15:2, "Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He airo --taketh away upward." It is serious business how a fellow who believes in the security of the believer lives. "Sin unto death" --loss of rewards.

I love that preparation in the communion service when the pastor stands before his people and says, "Beloved in the Lord, let us draw near with a true heart and confess our sins unto God, our Father, beseeching Him, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to grant us forgiveness." I always rejoice in the communion service where the pastor leads us into communion with sins forgiven.

- Q. In I John 5:16, doesn't that hold us responsible for our brother in a sense?
- A. Yes, it does. "If a man see his brother sin a sin unto death he shall ask [and there's the word "request"] and he shall give them life for them that sin not unto death," and the verses ahead of it. This has got to be handled very carefully because some brothers and some sisters will be really offended if you say to them, "Now this is not pleasing to the Lord." That shows a wrong attitude on the part of the brother or sister, but we are responsible. The second part of the verse, "There is sin unto death. I do not say that he shall request, or ask, or inquire concerning it." I think that John is saying there, "Keep your nose out of it," if death has entered in. But there is a responsibility for believers to minister to believers if they can do it in such a way as to lead them back into righteousness.
- C. When you say "sin unto death," when a baby is born and has no chance of life and dies right after birth, there is no sin there.
- A. That's right. The salvation of infants is a question to which a lot of people come up with different answers. I personally feel that the Scripture teaches that until a child is old enough to knowingly sin God does not hold him responsible. At the judgment seat of Christ the books are opened and the **works** are judged. An infant has no works for which to be judged. I remind you in the Old Testament in the case of David where he sinned with Bathsheba and a child was born, and God said, "I'm going to take that child home." David refused to eat, and his servants were afraid to even say anything to him. Then eventually the child died and the servants were whispering, and David saw that and asked, "Is the child dead?" They were afraid to answer but said, "Yes." As soon as he was told that he got up, washed himself and went in and ate. They said, "What kind of action is this?" And he said, "As long as the child lived I thought maybe God would spare him, but now that he's dead, I will go to be with him, where he is." I know where David went, so I know where the child is as well. Therefore, before a child reaches an age of accountability, and don't ask me when that is because I think it differs from child to child, some children mature earlier than others, but the Child Evangelism saying, "When a child is old enough to knowingly sin, he is old enough to savingly believe," I think is a correct statement.
- Q. Are you suggesting that every Christian who dies prematurely is guilty of sin?
- A. No, indeed. We have no way of knowing and that's why we cannot judge -- we just absolutely cannot judge. They used to say that when God took a child home He needed another angel. That "ain't" so because we don't become angels. We have no way of knowing when death comes to a Christian that it was death because of sin. Please be careful that you do not judge on that basis.

Q. Speaking of judgment, does that mean eternal judgment? That doesn't mean a difference of opinion, does it? "Judge not that ye be not judged." I've been wondering, if that means the final judgment, but we still give our opinions?

A. "Judge not that ye be not judged," that's in the Sermon on the Mount, and you'll find that that means unfair, hypocritical judgment. There are other passages that indicate we are to give a discerning type of judgment -- of individuals and our own lives. That's separate from the eventual judgment to which you and I will go.

C. I've heard it said that the Christian is able to judge the fruit of the life but not the life.

A. I think that, perhaps, is a good way to put it.

Q. Re someone who died prematurely.

A. We need to remember that "absent from the body, present with the Lord." The Apostle Paul said that is far better. The Apostle Paul in II Corinthians 12 was caught up into the third heaven, into Paradise. When he came back he said, "I can't tell you what was up there." But he did say in Philipppians, which he wrote later, that to be with the Lord is far better. And I like that kind of testimony because it is the testimony of experience.

Some folks say, "I have known people who claimed to be Christians, but later their lives were anything but 'Christian', so don't tell me a person that's once saved is always saved." Well, let me answer that briefly. You cannot judge another person one hundred percent. Amazingly enough, I cannot tell for sure whether you are a saved person -- and you cannot tell whether I am. There will be fruits in the life that we might judge, but we are not a hundred percent sure. I am sure I'm saved, you may be sure you're saved, but I cannot tell about you and you cannot tell about me. Occasionally Hebrews 6 is used along this line, and I want to look at a couple of those verses with you.

Hebrews 6, beginning at verse 1: "Therefore, leaving the principles of the doctrine of the Messiah, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, or of the doctrine of baptisms [plural], the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment." Now, all of those things were taught in the Old Testament, and that doctrine of baptisms is not the one we practice today, but it was the one found in Numbers 8 and in other places where various articles were baptized. Paul is saying here, "Let us leave those things behind; we're not going to talk about those again." "For this we will do [verse 3] if God permit. For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance, seeing they crucify for themselves the Son of

God again and put Him to an open shame. [Verse 9] But beloved, we are persuaded better things of you and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak."

Some believe that verses 4, 5, and 6 speak about being saved and then lost again. If that is true, and a person holds to that, then he must believe that you cannot be saved again, because you'll notice in verse 6, "it's impossible to renew them again unto salvation." So if you're saved and lost, you can't be saved again, if that's what those verses are teaching. Personally, I think the book of Hebrews is harder to understand than the book of Revelation. We must remember the time to which the book was pointing. It was written before 70 A.D. for it speaks about the temple standing and sacrifices still being offered. It is addressed to the Jewish people. Remember that this book was written sometime between 33 A.D. and 70 A.D., after the death of the Saviour, the resurrection, and the putting away of the Old Testament economy. No more was sacrifice in order, but faith in the Lord Jesus Christ was essential for salvation. And yet the Jewish people were continuing to offer those sacrifices.

Put yourself in their place. Suppose you and I could go to Jerusalem and that a temple was there. You and I would not think of taking an animal and sacrificing it under the Old Testament economy. Why? Because that is completely out of order. There was a day when not to sacrifice was wrong. Today, to sacrifice is wrong. The Apostle Paul was writing to people who were continuing to do those things which Christ had put away at Calvary. Therefore, I think he's talking about that sort of thing in this particular chapter. In any case, what he says in the first eight verses does not belong to salvation, for in verse 9 he says, "And we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation though we thus speak." So, those things earlier in the chapter do not accompany salvation.

I have in my own experience a number of situations such as people point to. For example, in the same special meetings in which I accepted the Lord as Saviour, Whitey accepted the Lord as his Saviour. When it came testimony time he would never stand up and testify. Now, that could have been simply because he was embarrassed -- I'm not blaming him for that. But some time later Whitey was back in his old habits, drinking and so on, and that's the last I knew of him because I moved away from there. It would be easy to say that Whitey was saved and then lost again. But I just do not know for sure whether he ever was saved or whether the Lord took him home, or whether later he came back to the Lord, because that is what I John 1 does for us as believers -- it makes that provision. I John 1 is written to Christians, and "if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Perhaps Whitey renewed himself in the Lord by using that verse.

Or, a worse story than that perhaps. I knew a superintendent of a rescue mission who carried on a great work. He left his wife, who was a beautiful singer, and ran off with a married woman who came to the mission at that time. I don't know what ever happened to them. But someone could say concerning that superintendent, "Well, he was



saved and then lost"; but I don't know. I'm not sure whether he was ever saved, or whether the Lord took him home prematurely, or whether he came back to the Lord later -- I just do not have any idea.

I repeat, you and I cannot tell one hundred percent concerning others, and we ought not to establish doctrine by experience, but we ought to judge experience by the teaching of the Word of God. Do you remember Peter, denying the Lord three times? If you and I had been there, at that point we'd be saying, "Peter surely lost his salvation." But the Lord said, "Peter, when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." The word "conversion" is used in two senses in the New Testament. One is the turning of a sinner to the Lord for salvation; the other is the turning back to the Lord for forgiveness of sin according to I John 1:8,9. And he did come back -- fellowship was broken, he confessed his sin, and the Lord used him mightily, as you know, in His service and in writing the Word of God.

There are at least 25 passages in the Scriptures which seem to teach that a believer is insecure. Let us look at one or two of them. **Matthew 24**, beginning at verse 6: "And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that ye be not troubled, for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom, and there shall be famines and pestilences and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of sorrows. Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted and shall kill you, and ye shall be hated of all nations for My name's sake. Then shall many be offended and shall betray one another and shall hate one another, and many false prophets shall arise and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound the love of many shall grow cold. But he that endures to the end, the same shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations. Then shall the end come. When ye therefore see the abomination of desolations spoken of by Daniel the prophet stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth let him understand), then let them who are in Judea flee into the mountains." The verse -- "But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved."

I speak kindly now, but those who believe that salvation is not secure quote this verse -- you must endure to the end and then you'll be saved. You never know until the end that you've held on and that you are saved.

I think the proper interpretation of that passage of Scripture is one which fits into the time of the coming of the Lord. You have in those verses great trouble and difficulties that will come upon people. The reason I know this is so is because in verse 15 that "abomination of desolations spoken of by Daniel the prophet" puts it into a future tense. That will be the time of "great tribulation [verse 21] such as was not since the beginning of the world." This is not talking about holding on spiritually. It's talking about being able to continue physically, for when the Lord returns, there will be a judgment. Those who are physically alive as believers shall be saved to enter into the period of time that follows, and it has nothing to do with salvation from sin. It means that there will be

some who will be able to physically endure until the end of that tribulation period and they will be saved at the coming of the Lord.

The word "saved" is used in several different senses in Scripture. It's used, for example, to be saved from harm and danger. In Acts 27 Luke writes, "All hope that we should be saved was gone." They were out there in the Mediterranean in the fierce storm and they were not sure they were going to make it to shore. All hope that they would be saved, physically, was gone. Sometimes it refers to healing -- "Thy faith hath saved thee," the Lord said to one individual who was healed. Then it also refers to salvation from sin. The context will show the meaning. I am confident that in this passage it refers to a physical salvation at the end of the Great Tribulation period.

C. David was in great sin on occasion, yet through it all he belonged to the Lord.

Some passages refer to false teachers who mislead others. Turn to II Peter 2. That's the passage where the dog has returned to his own vomit again. It refers to what John wrote in I John, "They went out from us because they are not of us." So there are some who are teachers who are not saved and who in the end turn away. They were never saved to begin with -- read II Peter 2 carefully. I'm always amazed at our Lord's words in Matthew 7 where some will come to the Lord and say, "Lord, Lord, have we not done this and that in Thy name"; and the Lord says, "Depart from Me ye workers of iniquity, I **never knew you.**" And there are teachers of the Scripture today, people in the pulpit who are **not born again**, but they try to carry the name of Christian. It's that sort of false teacher that misleads others that II Peter is talking about. Some passages are warnings -- Hebrews 10:26, "If we sin willfully, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin." Again, we're back to the Jewish nation.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the believer's advocate and high priest. To me, it is one of the more precious things in connection with this truth. The Lord's priesthood began with His ascension. Paul, in Hebrews 8, says, "If He were on earth He would not be a priest." You see, the priesthood was of the tribe of Levi and Christ was of the tribe of Judah. Therefore, the priesthood of our Lord did not begin until He ascended. But when He ascended, He began that intercession for us as believers -- I John 2:1, "We have an advocate [or paraclete] with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous." Romans 8:34, "Who is he that condemneth, shall Christ that died, who is even at the right hand of God making intercession for us?" and the answer of course is "No." Hebrews 7:25 is very wonderful, "Wherefore, He is able also to save them completely, or forever, who come unto God by Him." I think that says He saves us forever.

I hope it will not be true, but today perhaps I might sin. I'm sure that from day to day I do. When I do, Satan would like to say to the Father, "You see Bishop? He says he's a Christian, and look what he's done." And as the Father looks down to see me, suddenly over Bishop there comes a nail-pierced hand. And the Father sees, not Bishop in his sin, but the nail-pierced hand of the Saviour who died

to save me from my sins. The Father says, "It's enough." We have One in heaven who is our paraclete, our advocate, our high priest, and if I had nothing else but the priesthood of the Lord, I would be sure that I was saved and saved forever.

For a long time after I was saved, I was not sure of my salvation, and I confess to you that it was a very agonizing period of time. Someone would ask me, "Are you saved?" And I would say, "Well, I, I, I hope so." I felt I was hanging on, but I wasn't sure. Then this truth was made clear to me that it was not my holding on to God but God holding on to me. It was like a fellow who was hanging over a cliff and he couldn't let go for he knew there was a drop down there to destruction. Finally he had to let go and found that just six inches underneath his feet there was a ledge, and he rested on the ledge and was secure. It made all the difference in the world in my own personal experience; first, thinking I had to do something to be saved and learning I didn't -- only believe; and then thinking I had to hold on and learning that I didn't have to --and rested on the promises of God.

So, in summary, let's remember it is important how we live for His sake and for our sake; and let's work with both hands.

- C. Some denominations I know of do not use the word "security" but they use the word "assurance" -- if they are not secure they cannot have assurance.
- A. Right. I think it's all right to do that, but, as you said, assurance comes only if you know you are secure.

I had the privilege of studying under a fellow that I believe in his day was one of the best theologians in any seminary anywhere --Dr. Alva J. McClain, perhaps you've never heard of him. I remember a story he told once concerning his experience as a young man, not with relation to salvation, but as a young fellow he needed a job and jobs were not very plentiful. He applied to a telephone company and was taken to a place where they were working on telephone poles, and the man who was going to hire him asked, "Mr. McClain, have you had experience, can you climb the pole?" And Mr. McClain did not tell exactly the truth, he said, "Oh, yes." So the man hired him and gave him the tools to work with up there on the pole -- the clamps for his feet to spike his way up and the belt with all the tools hanging on. So Mr. McClain started to climb the pole, and of course the foreman could tell almost immediately that Mr. McClain had no experience of this kind at all. But he watched him as he got up to the top where he was going to have to work on the wires. There was Mr. McClain hanging on with one hand and trying to get two wires together with the other hand to fasten them. After some agonizing bit of time up there, the foreman called up to him and said, "Mr. McClain, fasten your safety belt around the pole and lean back and work with both hands."

Somehow, that explains to me my own experience with regard to salvation. I was saved, but I would have to say, "I hope so," and I was in a limited way trying to do things for the Lord. But once I

learned this precious truth, it seemed that I could rest in the assurance of the Word and could give the Lord all I had to work with both hands. I could depend upon the fact that the Lord would never, never leave me nor forsake me -- a triple negative in the Scriptures - - I don't know whether there is any other there or not -- it's the only one I know, but He gives to us eternal life -- we shall never perish, "neither shall anyone pluck us out of His hand."

**Prayer:** Our Heavenly Father, we thank You for the assurance that You have given us and that we rest with the everlasting arms underneath. Oh, God! We pray that we shall not worry about our destiny as we trust in Thee, but help us to be concerned about our lives since we have trusted. To this end send us forth to represent You today, in our Saviour's precious name. Amen.